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Neil Abercrombie
Governor

Mike McCartney
President and Chief Executive Officer

**Testimony of
Mike McCartney
President and Chief Executive Officer
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
on
H.C.R. 8 and H.R. 22
Urging the United States Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and
the United States Attorney General to Ease Visa Restrictions for the
People's Republic of China**

House Committee on Tourism
Monday, April 8, 2013
9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 312

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) strongly supports H.C.R. 8 and H.R. 22, which urges the U.S. Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Attorney General to include the People's Republic of China in the Visa Waiver Program and easing of restrictions for business and leisure travel from the People's Republic of China.

The People's Republic of China represents a large, under-exploited market for Hawai'i's visitor industry. With over a billion people, Chinese visitors to Hawai'i, who spend an average of over \$350 per day, only numbered 79,531 visitors in 2011. A major reason for the low number of Chinese visitors is the difficulty in obtaining a visa to travel to the United States.

Since the passage of the Travel Promotion Act of 2007, the federal government has established the goal of increasing international travel to the United States, including making improvements to the visa program, implementing the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) and the expanding the visa waiver program.

The China market represents an important potential for growth for Hawai'i's visitor industry, and including the People's Republic of China in the Visa Waiver program is a key component of that growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Jay Furfaro, Chair
Nadine K. Nakamura, Vice Chair
Tim Bynum
Gary L. Hooser
Ross Kagawa
Mel Rapozo
JoAnn A. Yukimura



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Ricky Watanabe, County Clerk
Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, Deputy County Clerk

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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

April 4, 2013

**TESTIMONY OF JAY FURFARO
COUNCIL CHAIR, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL**

**ON
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8
URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, AND THE UNITED STATES
ATTORNEY GENERAL TO EASE VISA RESTRICTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA
Committee on Tourism
Monday, April 8, 2013
9:00 A.M.
Conference Room 312**

Dear Chair Brower and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HCR 8. My testimony is submitted in my capacity as Council Chair of the Kaua'i County Council.

The Kaua'i County Council supported HCR 8 to be included in the 2013 Hawai'i State Association of Counties (HSAC) Legislative Package, which urges the United States Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Attorney General to ease the Visa restrictions for the People's Republic of China (PRC).


The PRC has approximately 1.3 billion citizens which represent a very large and lucrative pool of visitors, as the average PRC tourist to Hawai'i spends on average \$368 per day, compared to the \$275 daily for every Japanese tourist and \$178 per day for every other tourist to Hawai'i. However, despite the reciprocity between China and Hawai'i, the Visa application and approval process for PRC business and tourist travelers is an arduous and often lengthy one, which often deters potential visitors to Hawai'i and the United States (U.S.).

A PRC citizen who wishes to visit the U.S. must appear in person before a U.S. consulate official to obtain the Visa, but there are only five (5) U.S. consulates in the entire PRC. The average wait time for a PRC visa applicant far exceeds the wait time for other countries. A solution to ease this problem is for the PRC to be admitted into the U.S. State Department's Visa Waiver Program, which allows nationals from foreign countries to enter the U.S. for tourism or business related purposes for a maximum of ninety (90) days without obtaining a Visa. Currently there are thirty-six (36) countries admitted into the Visa Waiver Program.

Committee on Tourism
April 8, 2013
RE: HCR 8
Page 2

For the reason stated above, I respectfully request your support for this measure. Again, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,



JAY FURFARO
Council Chair, Kaua'i County Council

AB:lc

Hawai'i State Association of Counties (HSAC)
Counties of Kaua'i, Maui, Hawai'i & City & County of Honolulu

April 4, 2013

TESTIMONY OF MEL RAPOZO
PRESIDENT, HAWAII STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
ON
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8
URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, AND THE UNITED STATES
ATTORNEY GENERAL TO EASE VISA RESTRICTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA
Committee on Tourism
Monday, April 8, 2013
9:00 A.M.
Conference Room 312

Dear Chair Brower and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HCR 8. My testimony is submitted in my capacity as President of the Hawai'i State Association of Counties (HSAC).


HSAC is in full support of HCR 8, which urges the United States Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Attorney General to ease the Visa restrictions for the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The PRC has approximately 1.3 billion citizens which represent a very large and lucrative pool of visitors, as the average PRC tourist to Hawai'i spends on average \$368 per day, compared to the \$275 daily for every Japanese tourist and \$178 per day for every other tourist to Hawai'i. However, despite the reciprocity between China and Hawai'i, the Visa application and approval process for PRC business and tourist travelers is an arduous and often lengthy one, which often deters potential visitors to Hawai'i and the United States (U.S.).

A PRC citizen who wishes to visit the U.S. must appear in person before a U.S. consulate official to obtain the Visa, but there are only five (5) U.S. consulates in the entire PRC. The average wait time for a PRC visa applicant far exceeds the wait time for other countries. A solution to ease this problem is for the PRC to be admitted into the U.S. State Department's Visa Waiver Program, which allows nationals from foreign countries to enter the U.S. for tourism or business related purposes for a maximum of ninety (90) days without obtaining a Visa. Currently there are thirty-six (36) countries admitted into the Visa Waiver Program.

For the reason stated above, HSAC is in strong support of HCR 8 and asks for your favorable support. Again, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,


MEL RAPOZO
President, HSAC

AB:lc

COUNTY COUNCIL

Jay Furfaro, Chair
Nadine K. Nakamura, Vice Chair
Tim Bynum
Gary L. Hooser
Ross Kagawa
Mel Rapozo
JoAnn A. Yukimura



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii 96766

April 4, 2013

**TESTIMONY OF GARY L. HOOSER
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8
URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, AND THE UNITED STATES
ATTORNEY GENERAL TO EASE VISA RESTRICTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

Committee on Tourism
Monday, April 8, 2013
9:00 A.M.
Conference Room 312

Dear Chair Brower and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HCR 8. My testimony is submitted in my capacity as an individual member of the Kauai County Council, and as Chair of the Economic Development (Sustainability / Agriculture / Food / Energy) & Intergovernmental Relations Committee.

The Kauai County Council supported HCR 8 to be included in the 2013 Hawaii State Association of Counties (HSAC) Legislative Package, which urges the United States Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Attorney General to ease the Visa restrictions for the People's Republic of China (PRC).

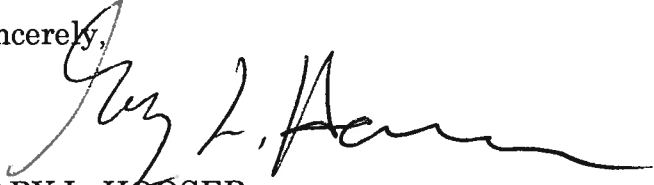
The PRC has approximately 1.3 billion citizens which represent a very large and lucrative pool of visitors, as the average PRC tourist to Hawaii spends on average \$368 per day, compared to the \$275 daily for every Japanese tourist and \$178 per day for every other tourist to Hawaii. However, despite the reciprocity between China and Hawaii, the Visa application and approval process for PRC business and tourist travelers is an arduous and often lengthy one, which often deters potential visitors to Hawaii and the United States (U.S.).

A PRC citizen who wishes to visit the U.S. must appear in person before a U.S. consulate official to obtain the Visa, but there are only five (5) U.S. consulates in the entire PRC. The average wait time for a PRC visa applicant far exceeds the wait time for other countries. A solution to ease this problem is for the PRC to be admitted into the U.S. State Department's Visa Waiver Program, which allows nationals from foreign countries to enter the U.S. for tourism or business related purposes for a maximum of ninety (90) days without obtaining a Visa. Currently there are thirty-six (36) countries admitted into the Visa Waiver Program.

Committee on Tourism
April 8, 2013
RE: HCR 8
Page 2

For the reason stated above, I respectfully request your support for this measure. Again, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

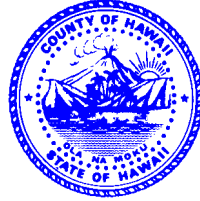
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary L. Hooser", written in a cursive style.

GARY L. HOOSER
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AB:lc

DENNIS "FRESH" ONISHI
Council Member
District 3



PHONE: (808) 961-8396
FAX: (808) 961-8912
EMAIL: donishi@co.hawaii.hi.us

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

April 4, 2013

The Honorable Tom Brower, Chair
and Members of the House
Committee on Tourism

Dear Chair Brower and Committee Members,

Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** of House Concurrent Resolution No. 8.

The People's Republic of China is the world's most populous country, the world's second largest economy and a major trading partner of the United States. Chunyun (春运), the annual spring festival travel season that coincides with the Lunar New Year holiday season, is the largest annual human migration in the world, with more than a billion people vacating the cities to visit their ancestral homes. The Chinese are waking up.

But the United States, and Hawai'i especially, risks missing out on this enormous market as a result of the restrictive visa requirements that are in effect today. This resolution requests the U.S. government to take sensible steps to reduce the visa restrictions in place for the economic benefit of Hawai'i and the rest of the nation.

Please amend this resolution to address Secretary of State John Kerry. Please also remove the reference to the outgoing Acting Commerce Secretary Rebecca Blank, and recommend approval.

Sincerely,

Dennis "Fresh" Onishi
Hawai'i County Council
District 3

Council Chair
Gladys C. Baisa

Vice-Chair
Robert Carroll

Council Members
Elle Cochran
Donald G. Couch, Jr.
Stacy Crivello
Don S. Guzman, Esq.
G. Riki Hokama
Michael P. Victorino
Mike White

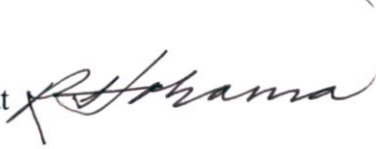


Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/council

April 5, 2013

TO: The Honorable Tom Brower, Chair
And Members
House Committee on Tourism

FROM: G. Riki Hokama, Maui County Councilmember/Lanai seat 

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of HCR 8 and HR 22 urging the United States Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Attorney General to ease visa restrictions for the People's Republic of China (Public Hearing: Monday, April 08, 2013 at 9:00 am in House Conference Room 312)

As the Lanai member on the Maui County Council, I offer testimony in support of the subject resolutions urging the United States Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Attorney General to ease visa restrictions for the People's Republic of China.

For nearly 50 years, Maui County has participated in the Sister Cities program that fosters friendship, cultural understanding, and economic exchange with other countries. In 1998, the County entered into a Sister City relationship with Sanya County, Hainan Province, People's Republic of China and recently, hosted the Mayor of Sanya City and other dignitaries during their visit to Maui. From this experience, it was evident that there is a strong interest in travel to Hawaii, and the easing of visa restrictions would have a very beneficial impact. I urge your support of the subject resolutions.

Also, I concur with testimony in support submitted by Mel Rapozo, President of the Hawaii State Association of Counties.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

cc: Mel Rapozo, President, HSAC

Council Chair
Gladys C. Baisa

Vice-Chair
Robert Carroll

Council Members
Elle Cochran
Donald G. Couch, Jr.
Stacy Crivello
Don S. Guzman
G. Riki Hokama
Michael P. Victorino
Mike White



Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/council

April 5, 2013

TO: The Honorable Tom Brower, Chair
House Committee on Tourism

FROM: Michael P. Victorino, Treasurer
Hawaii State Association of Counties

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Victorino".

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF APRIL 8, 2013; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HR 22 AND HCR8,
URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, AND THE UNITED STATES
ATTORNEY GENERAL TO EASE VISA RESTRICTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to urge the Federal government to ease Visa restrictions for citizens of The People's Republic of China.

I am aware that the President of the Hawaii State Association of Counties ("HSAC") has submitted testimony, on behalf of HSAC, in support these measures, which are in the HSAC Legislative Package. As the Treasurer of HSAC, I concur with the testimony submitted by the President, and urge you to support these measures.

ocs:proj:legis:13legis:13testimony:hr22hcr8_paf13-140a_kmh

Hawai'i State Association of Counties (HSAC)
Counties of Kaua'i, Maui, Hawai'i & City & County of
Honolulu

April 5, 2013

TESTIMONY OF STANLEY CHANG
SECRETARY, HAWAII STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
ON

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8
URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE DEPARTMENT OF
HOMELAND SECURITY, AND THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY GENERAL TO EASE
VISA RESTRICTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Monday, April 8, 2013

9:00 a.m.

Conference Room 312

Dear Chair Brower and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HCR 8 in my capacity as Secretary of the Hawaii State Association of Counties (HSAC) Executive Committee.

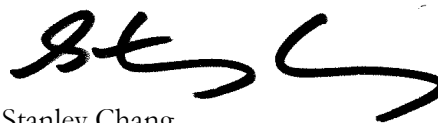
HSAC supports HCR 8 which urges the United States Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Attorney General to ease visa restrictions for the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The PRC, with its 1.3 billion citizens, represents a very large and lucrative pool of visitors, as the average PRC tourist to Hawaii is expected to spend about \$368 per day. However, in spite of the reciprocity between the China and Hawaii, the visa application and approval process for PRC business and tourist travelers is an arduous and often length process that deters many potential visitors to Hawaii and the United States.

A PRC citizen who wishes to visit the United States must appear in person before a United States consular official to obtain the visa, but there are only five United States consulates in the entire PRC. A solution to ease this problem is for the PRC to be admitted to the United States Department of State's Visa Waiver Program, which allows nationals from foreign countries to enter the United States for tourism or business related purposes for a maximum of ninety days without obtaining a visa. Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are part of the thirty-seven countries in the United States Department of State's Visa Waiver program.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask for your favorable passage of HCR 8 and thank the Committee for allowing me to provide testimony.

Sincerely,



Stanley Chang
Secretary, HSAC

4396 Rice Street, Suite 209, Lihue, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766, (808) 241-4188

HCR8

Submitted on: 4/8/2013

Testimony for TOU on Apr 8, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jared Dmello	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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